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ABSTRACT

Proper planning and the use of current computer technology can provide a mechanism not only for coordinating and directing a broad-based recruitment program, but also for compiling a detailed database on applicant and prospective student markets. At West Shore Community College, these objectives were addressed through the development of an on-line Prospective Student Contact System (PSCS), which provides: (1) a systematic process of communicating with prospective students; (2) the mechanism and data to measure the effectiveness of recruitment efforts; (3) a database of information on the curricular interests and demographic characteristics of applicants and prospective students; and (4) information indicating which member of the college community had made contact with a prospective student and when and where. The PSCS involves two inseparably linked processes: a recordkeeping function and an information delivery system, which provide for the constant monitoring of and communication with prospective students once a request for information has been received. This descriptive report includes information on the computer configuration used to operate the system, the data obtained for each prospective student and how the data are used, and the output of the PSCS (e.g., status inquiry reports by program, high school, curricular interest, and date of enrollment; and mailing labels). Appendices provide a flowchart illustrating the PSCS and sample status inquiries. (LAL)

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BRINGING RECRUITMENT ON-LINE

Submitted by

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March 11, 1985

BRINGING RECRUITMENT ON-LINE

Introduction

Recruitment in the 80's will require a well-designed marketing and recruitment effort on the part of college personnel especially as traditional applicant pools (i.e. the high school age population) begin to dwindle. The successful recruitment strategy will prove to be the one which can best integrate a role for everyone on the campus in the recruitment effort. Admissions personnel, conscious of this fact, have labored at length over the best methodology to incorporate all aspects and resources of the college on the recruitment effort.

Any attempt to focus and coordinate the activities of all members of the college community toward enhancing recruitment would be indeed an ambitious undertaking. Yet, proper planning and the use of current computer technology can provide a mechanism for not only coordinating and directing a broad-based recruitment program but also for compiling a detailed examination of applicant markets. This information can enhance program planning, target activities to specific market segments and coordinate an effective communication network between the institution and prospective students.

Prospective Student Contact System

My prospect of facing a new position at West Shore Community College, Michigan, provided the perfect impetus for the development

of an on-line system by which 1) the recruitment program, utilizing faculty, students, and alumni in this effort, could be integrated throughout the campus and coordinated through the Office of Admissions, and, 2) a data base of the prospective student pool could be created which would provide the demographic, curricula, and recruitment data necessary to identify sub-populations while analyzing the frequency and effectiveness of communications with prospective students. The net result of the project would be a linkage between the Office of Admissions and the resources on the campus which would lead to follow-up interaction with prospective students by members of the college community other than those in the Office of Admissions (specifically faculty).

The Prospective Student Contact System (PSCS) was developed to accomplish these goals. This on-line, data base system provided:

1. a systematic process of communicating with prospective students which was easily monitored and updated,
2. the mechanism and data to measure the effectiveness of recruitment in the field,
3. a data-base of demographic information including curricula interests among persons in the applicant pool, data on prospective students by high school, residency, anticipated date of enrollment, veteran status, etc.; and,
4. information which would indicate which member of the college community had made contact with a prospective student, and when and where the contact was made.

The basic design for the system appears in Figure 1. The equipment used to run the program is currently an IBM System 36 with 256K memory and 200K megabyte hard disk storage. Memory use

at the present time is 10K. This program, however, can be accommodated by many microcomputers although memory and storage configurations might be a limiting factor. The PSCS activates two processes: a recordkeeping function and an information delivery system. Figure 1 details the activation of these processes by tracking an inquiry as it is entered on the computer and as appropriate information is forwarded to the prospective student. These two systems are inseparably linked in order for a constant and timely delivery of information to be initiated and recorded. Obviously, this linkage is of vital importance to the effectiveness of all recruitment efforts.

As each school has developed correspondence appropriate to its potential market segments, the information delivery system need not be altered to accommodate on-line recording with the PSCS. However, the PSCS can be used to indicate when particular groups have been contacted and when subsequent correspondence should be forwarded. This record-keeping function provides for the constant monitoring and examination of communication with prospective students.

Closer examination of the PSCS on-line system starts with the initialization of the system, which begins once a request of information has been obtained. This information is recorded on a data entry screen (Figure 2) which automatically assigns a contact record number to each prospective student. As indicated in Figure 2, the following information is recorded:

* name
* address
* expected term of enrollment (e.g. 862 = second term)
* veteran status (e.g. 1=veteran, 2=non-veteran)
* high school code (e.g. a two-digit code within the college's service area)

* telephone
* computer supplied date of entry
* add/delete/inactive status code (e.g. 1=add, 2=delete, 3=inactive but retained on historic tape)
* interest codes (e.g. a two-digit curriculum identifier)
* item code (e.g. a two-digit identifier as to the type(s) of correspondence sent with the accompanying date the information was forwarded)
* contact code (e.g. an alpha/numeric identifier for each member of the campus and participating alumnus to whom the inquiry was made or who had supplied the office with information regarding the contact)

This on-line mechanism can track a certain student from the initial contact through all subsequent contacts. The data obtained from the system can also be used to provide output such as the following:

1. Cumulative alpha listing on a bi-monthly basis (Figure 3)

2. Status inquiry reports by

   a. program
   b. high school
   c. interest code or curricula
   d. item code
   e. date of enrollment term, etc.

3. Mailing labels (cumulative by alpha or by status inquiry - a particular, specified parameter, like high school)

Figure 4 provides an example of output by curriculum (interest code) which can be, for example, supplied to each divisional dean, department chairperson, or faculty member in order to identify the current interest among prospective students for a particular program. With such information, a particular department might target correspondence to prospective students in that area. This is especially helpful in communicating new course offerings in a particular curriculum.

The information available through the PSCS can also be used to determine a yield rate for any of the items or parameters specified on the system. Yield rate, in this sense, is defined as the number

of students in a specific group who matriculate divided by the total number of students in that group. This yield rate is extremely helpful to faculty and administrators as they plan for classes for incoming students. For example, if over the past few years it has been shown that 50% of those listed as prospective students eventually matriculate, it might be anticipated that a similar number might matriculate in the current year. Obviously, this anticipated inflow of students from the applicant pool becomes more precise as data on the system is maintained and accumulated from year to year.

Finally, the system provides for the production of mailing labels for the individuals listed on the system. These labels can be generated based upon any of the identifiers listed for the system (i.e. item code, contact code, high school, etc.). This option provides a tremendous opportunity for targeted follow-up correspondence to identified populations, especially those who had not matriculated.

Integrated Recruitment Approach

The use of the status inquiry function of the system (a cumulative report based on any given identifier) can provide faculty and administrators with a record of their contacts with prospective students as well as an update (daily if needed) of recruitment activity and interest as related to their curricula. This information can be another helpful tool in enhancing their involvement in the recruitment process and can promote their active role in the recruitment/ marketing effort.

Plans for the future call for the PSCS to be used to link prospective students with faculty, alumni, and staff with the hope

that these college volunteers will make direct personnel contact with each person on the list prior to that individual's appearance on the campus. A logical progression from this process might be to integrate the "assignment" of advisors (either by student request and/or as a result of any other current methodology) into the PSCS system. Such personalized attention will indeed enhance the activities associated with the delivery process and will increase the involvement of all interested staff members and alumni in the recruitment and advising process.

Conclusion

The Prospective Student Contact System (PSCS) is a viable and adaptable program for integrating technology into the recruitment process and, in so doing, provides a unique opportunity to integrate all interested members of the campus into this marketing process. This approach to an integrated, on-line recruitment system will not serve as the panacea for recruitment success. However, the information provided by the system as well as its application in measuring results will prove to be a cost effective and useful tool in meeting the enrollment growth challenges of the future.

FIGURE 1

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT CONTACT SYSTEM

Flowchart

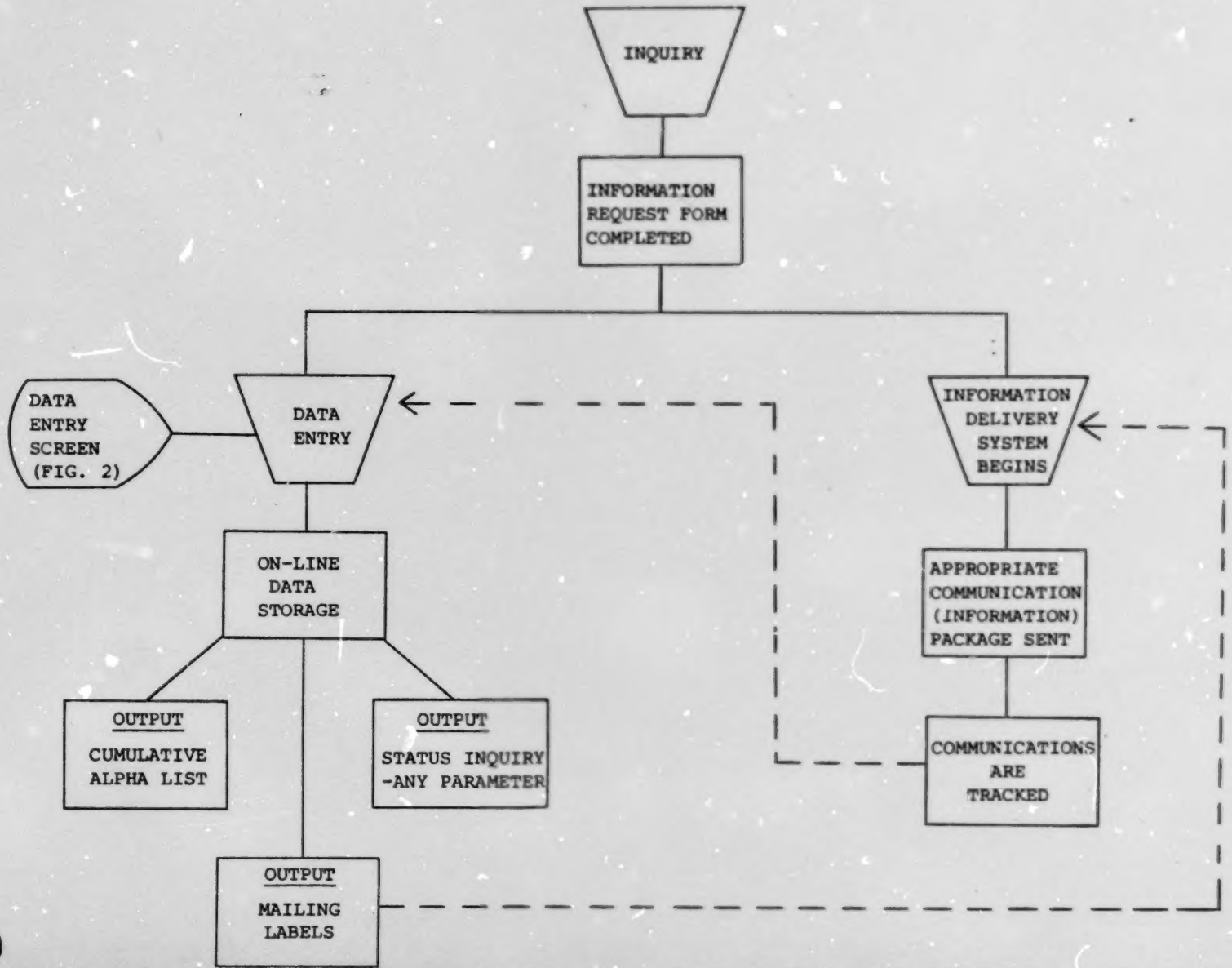

FIGURE 2

```
                POTENTIAL STUDENT CONTACT SYSTEM
                  STUDENT ENTRY/UPDATE SCREEN
                      FOR CON ACT #  3184

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY,ST                                ZIP

ENROLLMENT TERM              DATE  ..  11 29 84
VET                          HIGH SCHOOL
PHONE     616                ADD/DEL/INACTIVE 1

INTEREST CODES

ITEM CODE          DATE              CONTACT CODE       (X9)


NEXT CONTACT # 3185                  CMD 1  no update   CMD 7  End of job
```

FIGURE 3

(PSCS03) SPRING 1985 WEST SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 12/11/84 14:16:03 PAGE 1

(ONLY ACTIVE) STATUS INQUIRY: INCLUSIVE LIST

NAME		ADDRESS	CITY/STATE	ZIP	PHONE	MAJOR CODE	TRM	CC	COR	DATE	HC	PNUM	V
ABB	TEDDY	323 CANDLESTICK	WHERE, MI	40039	616-000-0000	07-06-85-00	854	A9	02	12/07/84	00	3204	
ABBA	M	333 N FRENCH	SOMEWHERE, MI	40000	301-555-0001	06-07-85-00	854	B3	02	12/07/84	06	3201	
ABE	DON	6487 E WEST ROAD	NOWHERE, MI	40002	301-555-0009	26-49-50-85	854	A9	11	12/07/84	10	3202	V
ABELING	WHO	23 TOWER, APT 3	EVERYWHERE, MI	40398		01-04-02-85	854	B3	02	12/07/84	00	3203	

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FIGURE 4

(PSCS04) SPRING 1985 WEST SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 12/11/84 14:13:51 PAGE 1

(ONLY ACTIVE) STATUS INQUIRY: SELECTIVE LIST CODES SELECTED: 85 (Business Administration)

NAME		ADDRESS	CITY/STATE	ZIP	PHONE	MAJOR CODE	TRM	CC	COR	DATE	HS	PNUM	V
ABB	TEDDY	323 CANDLESTICK	WHERE, MI	40039	616-000-0000	07-06-85-00	854	A9	02	12/07/84	00	3204	
ABBA	M	333 N FRENCH	SOMEWHERE, MI	40000	301-555-0001	06-07-85-00	854	B3	02	12/07/84	06	3201	
ABE	DON	6487 E WEST ROAD	NOWHERE, MI	40002	301-555-0009	26-49-50-85	854	A9	11	12/07/84	10	3202	V
ABELING	WHO	23 TOWER, APT 3	EVERYWHERE, MI	40398		01-04-02-85	854	B3	02	12/07/84	00	3203	

STUDENTS ON THIS LIST- 4

MAJOR CODE - Curricula (major) (maximum 4)

TRM - Term of expected enrollment

CC - Contact code:
Alpha - Person code
Numeric - Location of contact

COR - Type of correspondence sent

HS - High school attended for those currently in high school

PNUM - Contact number

V - Veteran

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